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## REVIEWS AND NOTICES

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*The Novels of Ferdinand Fabre.* By RAY P. BOWEN. Boston: R. G. Badger, 1918. Pp. 138. \$1.25 net.

This interesting study, though slight and sketchy in some of its features, helps to place Fabre among the writers of the realistic generation. The volume includes an account of Fabre's life and career; a chapter on the classification of the novels; another on *Les Courbezons*, as setting the author's pace; then successive chapters on the autobiographical novels, those of peasant life, and those concerning the Church. A good conclusion and a bibliography appear at the end of the work.

The first biographical chapter is very satisfactory and offers much new material; but one wonders to what extent Fabre's fiction should be used among the biographical sources. The points emphasized are: the Southerner's *sensibilité*, his training for the church and subsequent withdrawal from the fold; his knowledge of Languedoc and ignorance of Paris, where he seems to have been isolated for some time; his gradual success in his chosen limited field. The threefold classification of the novels is about the best that can be done and is in accordance with critical tradition. The ecclesiastical fiction should, however, be considered as the core of Fabre's work. Mr. Bowen's analysis is open to objection in two other respects: he mentions but does not sufficiently stress the intermingling of kinds, the fact that autobiography, the peasantry, and especially the Church reappear at all stages in Fabre's career. Consequently the secondary division, according to chronology, becomes confused with the logical division and does not show any consistent development. Perhaps this is Fabre's characteristic rather than Mr. Bowen's fault; and one may admit a certain growth in anticlerical feeling during the novelist's second period, and the fact that his last period, like that of George Sand, is marked a return to the scenes of his youth.

Fabre appears then as a belated representative of *le roman personnel*, as a regionalist, and as a realistic delineator of peasantry and clergy. It should be more emphasized that he portrays these classes according to the virtues and vices of each; the ambition and pride of the priesthood are contrasted with their charity and simplicity. This agrees with the naturalistic program, from Diderot to Balzac, and Mr. Bowen might well have made more of the Balzacian features of Fabre's realism. The Abbé Tigrane, in particular, offers close parallels with the Curé of Tours, and the animalism of peasant life as displayed by Fabre, is first rendered by Balzac. Yet a certain apartness is to be found in the work of Fabre, autodidactic, isolated in his formative years, coming between the romantic and the realistic groups. The points of similarity with Hardy and with Trollope seem well taken.

The novels most discussed and most highly placed are these: *Les Courbezon*, the road-breaker, uniting all three kinds; *Mon Oncle Célestin*, with its central figure of the good priest, still with a strong autobiographical tinge; *Le Chevrier*, a study of the Languedoc peasantry (cf. *Modern Philology*, XV, 171 ff.), which Fabre generally views from a position intermediate between the idealism of Sand and the naturalism of Balzac (cf. p. 91); *L'Abbé Tigrane*, the ecclesiastical masterpiece, and the best known of the list.

Mr. Bowen's treatment, while pleasant and informing, lacks intensity of critical analysis and definiteness of presentation. A similar softness of outline appears in his style. These faults, while not excessive, might have been remedied by more reading in French criticism and more use of the same in the present study, which (apart from its valuable biography) offers, as a critical contribution, mainly the repetition of a few salient points.

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*Historia de Litteratura Classica (1502-1580)*. By FIDELINO DE FIGUEIREDO. Lisboa: Livraria Classica Editora de A. M. Teixeira, 1917.

*Characteristics of Portuguese Literature*. By FIDELINO DE FIGUEIREDO. Coimbra: Imprensa da Universidade, 1916.

The author of the above-mentioned works makes no pretense to scientific method. He expressly warns his readers that he has no new biographical or bibliographical facts to offer concerning the authors he treats. In the first of these books he presents his personal appreciation of the classic masterpieces of Portuguese literature. The value of this very subjective criticism can only be appraised by one better acquainted with the subject than the present reviewer. Gil Vicente, Sá de Miranda, and Camões are fully treated. There are chapters on the classic drama, the lyric poets, the novelists, the historians, and the mystics. The volume is well written and readable throughout.

The second work is a translation from the Portuguese of an article which first appeared in the *Revista de Historia*. Senhor Figueiredo finds that the following are the distinctive traits of Portuguese literature: Great interest in navigation and discovery, the result of Portugal's prominent part in the prosecution of geographical research; predominance of lyricism; fondness for epic poetry, a genre for which the Portuguese have much talent; scarcity of the drama; absence of both the philosophical and the critical spirit; aloofness from the public and a certain mysticism of thought and sentiment. Spanish literature shares some of these traits. The chief distinction would seem to be that the genius of Spain is predominately realistic, while that of Portugal is lyric and idealistic. In the drama Spain is as strong as Portugal is weak.

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